

**Preliminary Amendment of U.S. National Stage for International Application  
PCT/EP03/03433 filed April 2, 2003**

**In the Specification:**

Please amend the instant Specification, without prejudice, as follows:

Please delete all text above line 9 of page 1.

At page 1, above line 9, please add the following new section headings and title of the invention:

**--TITLE OF THE INVENTION**

**Three Stage Processes for the Separation  
of Supercritical or Near-Critical Mixtures**

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION--**

At page 2, at line 8 thereof, please delete the section heading "Description of the Invention", and insert the following new section heading and new paragraph:

**--BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

The present invention relates, in general, to the production of fatty alcohols, especially by hydrogenation of the corresponding esters under supercritical or near-critical conditions, and more particularly to a technically simplified and economically optimized process for separating the compressed gas mixtures.--

At page 2, at line 25 thereof, please insert the following new section heading:

**--DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION--**

At page 6, between lines 1 and 2 thereof, please add the following new paragraph:

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--What is claimed is:--.

On a separate, new page 7, please add the following new section heading and paragraph containing an Abstract of the Disclosure:

**--ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

Processes for separating supercritical or near-critical mixtures containing hydrogen, a solvent gas, methanol and a fatty alcohol under an initial pressure of from 100 to 300 bar are described, wherein the processes comprise: (a) reducing the pressure of such a mixture in a first stage to a pressure of from 50 to 150 bar to form a first recycle gas and a first partially-separated intermediate mixture, wherein the reduced pressure in the first stage is at least below the initial pressure; (b) reducing the pressure of the first partially-separated intermediate mixture in a second stage to a pressure of from 10 to 50 bar to form a second recycle gas and a second partially-separated intermediate mixture; and (c) reducing the pressure of the second partially-separated intermediate mixture in a third stage to a pressure of from 1 to 10 bar to form a third recycle gas and a fatty alcohol product.--